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NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF BOOK ILLUSTRATING IN AMERICA.

II.

THERE is little to be said in favor of ante-revolutionary engraving. As we have seen, the number of professionals and amateurs was about equal, and this equality extends in a great measure to their work. Poupard is, perhaps, an exception. He was a very good relief-engraver and a finished workman on copper. He was probably a Frenchman who had learned his art in his native country. Turner and Dawkin were, I think, about on a par with the English engravers of the time. Revere did about as good work before the Revolution as he did after it. Franklin, Thomas, and Fleet's negro were, as I have stated, amateurs.

From the close of the war to the end of the eighteenth century, printing presses and printing offices multiplied not only in numbers but in their power of production. But three years after the peace of 1783, the Didot of the United States, as Brissot de Warville named Isaiah Thomas, owned his own paper mill, and kept no less than sixty presses running to supply his five stores in Massachusetts, as well as those in New York, Albany and Baltimore. In each of these cities, as well as in Philadelphia, New Haven and Hartford, there were other large establishments, such as Hugh Gaine's and William Durrel's of New York, and Matthew Corey's of Philadelphia. A very large number of books came from these houses. These varied in size from an inch square to large folios. Many of these books were illustrated, for ten years before the close of the century the engravers had multiplied to such an extent that Thomas issued, in 1791, a folio Bible, with fifty page copper-plates, and the following year William Darrell of New York issued a folio Josephus, with sixty full-page engravings. Amongst the copper-plate engravers at this date, in addition to Paul Revere, who did not die until 1812, were Tiebout, Tisdale, Rollinson, Allen, Doolittle, Tanner, Anderson, Neagle, Peter R. Maverick, Scholes and Kearney. Rollinson was an Englishman. He commenced life as a button chaser. Allen had been an engraver of music. Doolittle was a native of Connecticut. Tanner was a native of New York, and had received the best art education which the time afforded. Nagle was the son of an English engraver of reputation. Peter R. Maverick was an American born. Of these twelve engravers, four had been silversmiths and one a physician. Of this one, Alexander Anderson, we have, thanks to Benjamin Lossing and the New York Historical Society, a full and succinct account. He was born in New York in 1775. His father, although a Scotchman, was a thorough republican. He printed the *Constitutional Gazette*, in opposition to Rivington's Tory organ, and soon earned for himself the title of "the rebel printer." He was obliged to fly from New York upon the approach of the English army. When peace was declared, young Anderson was put to school in New York, and there learned Latin and Greek, and became "a great reader." One day, finding in an encyclopedia some instructions for engraving, he tried his prentice hand with a tool he had constructed from the back spring of a pocket knife, on some copper cents which had been rolled out for him by one Bruger, a silversmith. I here quote his own words: "An obliging blacksmith afterwards made some tools for me, and I began to work in type-metal. I engraved some small ships and sold them at the newspaper offices. Other little jobs followed, and I produced some spare cash. As there was but one other person working in the same line, I began to feel of some consequence." At fourteen he was apprenticed to a physician. In 1796 he graduated, after having been employed for three months at Bellevue amongst yellow fever patients. During his apprenticeship he continued, by engraving, to earn money to help pay for medical lectures, and in 1793, having read a sketch of Bewick's life and works, and seen his illustrations, he made his first cut on box-wood. Although he seems to have felt that the practice of medicine was not his true calling, he labored on until the dreadful yellow fever of 1798 robbed him of his wife and child. From that time he seems to have abandoned medicine for art, and in 1802 engraved the quadrupeds after Bewick.

From this time he regularly engraved, both on copper and on wood, abandoning the former about 1812, and died in 1870, a few weeks before his ninety-fifth birthday.

In this brief outline I have followed Anderson's auto-biographical sketch in the appendix, rather than Lossing's excellent memoirs, because neither in it, nor as far as I have been able to discover, anywhere else, does he claim what has been claimed for him, namely, that he was the pioneer American wood-engraver. He was a gentleman, refined and kind-hearted, conscientious almost to a fault, of sterling integrity, modest and self-denying, a good artist, an excellent miniature painter, one of the best of the early copper-plate engravers,

and the first American to raise relief-engraving to the dignity of a fine art.

In addition to Anderson, at the close of the eighteenth century, the relief-engravers whose names I find signed to book illustrations about this time are W. S. Lay, Howe and Wordsworth. From 1800 to about 1830, copper-plate engraving held sway for the illustration of all classes of books, from a folio Bible to a history of Cock Robin. The influence of the copper-plate engravers having been very much strengthened by the advent, soon after 1800, of W. S. Leney, who had made a reputation for himself in England as a stipple-engraver in the Bartolozzi manner, by the beautiful work of Asher Durand, both as a designer and engraver, the clever frontispiece by P. Maverick, the capital work of Tisdale in Dwight's *Echo*, 1807, and Trumbull's *Mac Fingal*, both designs and engravings, and Edwin, who, commencing work in the last century, pulled himself well to the front in 1812. Much was done from 1804 to 1820, by the *Portfolio Magazine*, published in Philadelphia, to encourage original designs and American engravers, line, stipple, and aqua-tint all having a showing. The prevailing style, however, was the stipple which Bartolozzi had made popular in England a quarter of a century earlier.

Wood-engraving, as a means of book illustrating, was making some progress in popular favor. Three years before the close of the last century, Anderson had engraved and published a series of small books, with engravings on wood. In 1801, John Babcock of Hartford issued "The Emblems of Mortality," by the same engraver, after Bewick. Many of the New York publishers gave him work, notably The Religious Tract Society, and Wood, the publisher to the Society of Friends.

Anderson's first pupils, Lansing, Dearborn, Morgan and Hall, were all well at work before 1830, as were also several other wood-engravers who were not of this apostolic succession, such as Bowen, Mason, Gilbert, Fairchild, Horton, Barber, etc. These practiced their art in Boston, Philadelphia and Hartford. In 1830, the National Academy of Design established a course of lectures on wood-engraving, with Abraham J. Mason as lecturer. In 1823, appeared the *New York Mirror* which, although not regularly illustrated, published many beautiful steel plates, and a few years later engravings on wood, by Mason and others, not the least beautiful being the vignette which adorned its title page, drawn by Weir and engraved by Durand. The *Mirror* was followed, in 1831, by *The Family Magazine*, with engravings only on wood. Following this, in 1834, was *Bowen's and Hartwell's American Magazine* with engravings on wood; not successful as a business enterprise, for the taste was now decidedly for steel plates, and such wood-engraving as was done during the next ten years had a hard time to compete with its more fashionable and more beautiful rival, pure line steel-engraving.

In 1808, according to W. S. Baker, steel was substituted for copper by Jacob Perkins, in the manufacture of bank-notes, three years after its first use in England. This date may be the correct one, but in a number of *The Portfolio* for 1815, preserved in the Philadelphia Athenaeum, is a bank-note engraved on steel, inserted as a novelty. The same authority gives 1820 as the year in which steel plates begin to take the place of copper ones for picture engraving. I am inclined to think this date fully ten years too early, as I have searched in vain for an American book illustrated by means of steel earlier than 1830, when they begin to appear labelled "steel-plate." Mr. Baker may, however, be right. As the late Alfred Jones, the distinguished plate-engraver, in a letter to me says: "I doubt if any expert could decide, from examining a proof, whether it was printed from a steel or copper-plate."

The enterprising German carriage draughtsman, afterwards print-seller, Akerman, had introduced into English literature, the *Annual*, in 1822, and after 1830 the flood had well set upon our shores. We had *Ladies' Wreaths*, *Forget-me-nots*, *Literary Souvenirs*, *New Year's Gifts*, *Gifts*, *Keepsakes*, *Parlor Annuals*, and heaven knows what not—mushy literature with equally mushy illustrations, Iones, Haidees, Zuleikas, with impossible swan-like necks and eyes rolled up in languishing attitudes, and had enough, most of them were, without the advent from Scotland of the engraver Dick, with his shopful of assistants and pupils, and his blotting-paper mezzotints. It was during this fever for *Annuals* that *Godley's Ladies' Book* was established. Many of its plates were beautiful examples of the engravers' art, but the Scot set his blighting hand upon it.

The Darley Cooper vignette proof-impressions, published in 1862, give a fair idea of the character of work done by our steel-engravers, a school which, I think I am justified in saying, was not surpassed by those of other countries. By this time it had lost something of its freshness and individuality. Its greatest ornament, Asher B. Durand, had uttered his swan's song in the creation of his beautiful "Ariadne," after Vanderlyn, and, as a painter, had become president of the National Academy of Design, while others made the discovery, both the most unusual and the most fatal for artists, how to make money, they being engaged in the manufacture of bank-notes.

Two years later the wood-designers and engravers had something, to say, and said it well, in Putnam's Artists' Edition of the "Sketch Book." Four years later came the beautiful edition of Whittier's "Snow-bound."

I have passed over the various attempts at the establishment of illustrated newspapers. I must, however, mention the Childs' paper, of the Religious Tract Society, with its beautiful illustrations—an eminent engraver, Childs, being its art director. *Harper's Magazine*, 1850; Wyckoff's *Picture Gallery*, George Thomas and Storey's *Illustrated News*, 1852. W. LEWIS FRASER.

THE APRIL "LOTOS" EXHIBITION.

A FITTING close to the exhibition season of this club was furnished by Mr. Catholina Lambert, who contributed twenty-four of his choice paintings, which were admirably grouped on the walls of the little gallery. The five Dutch portraits of men on the west wall, together with the English group of five women and one man on the opposite wall, presented the last word that ever has been said in portraiture. The Van Dycks, the somewhat finer working Mierevelt, the Van der Helst, equal to any of the portraits in the famous "*Schuttersmaaltijd*" of the Ryks Museum, did not, however, excel the magnificent "Pacheco," or "The Duke of Wellington" of Sir Thomas Lawrence. To mention each one of the numbers of this exhibition would be to give a description of the best qualities of the old schools, which form now the inspiration and basis on which the artists of to-day are building.

The fourteen portraits were supplemented with seven landscapes, four of the best of the early English and three Dutch scenes; the finest Jan van Goyen I have ever seen, a powerful Salomon Ruysdael and a characteristic Moonlight of Aart van der Neer. Added thereto were three Dutch *genre* subjects, one of which by Jan Miense Molenaar, was better than is usually met with. His is a warm, clear color, his touch is spirited, and his humor full but seldom coarse.

This was an occasion which gave the keenest pleasure to the growing number of those who appreciate the older schools.

AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTIONS.

I.

THE COLLECTION OF MR. J. W. BROWN, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

AS announced, there will appear a series of articles on American Private Collections which I anticipate to be of great interest to my readers. It is understood that the owners allow their collections to be described and commented upon only in the interest of art knowledge, overcoming their scruples against unwelcome notoriety for the sake of the dissemination of information which may be helpful to artist and collector. An agreeable *surprise* is often discovered in these visits, when pictures long hidden, forgotten, lost, come again to view.

I have selected for this first paper one of the smaller collections, in which, however, are found some canvases of surpassing interest and merit. Mr. J. W. Brown is an active business man, whose tastes lead him, after the arduous toil of vast interests, to seek quiet enjoyment in the possession and study of such works of art as appeal to him—and that these indicate refined culture and knowledge the collection proves, for although less important names do appear, the best examples of these men have invariably been chosen.

At once we stand before three examples by George Inness, which give a complete history of this master's art. The first one is the large "Delaware Water Gap" painted in 1857, with its delicate finish and beautiful sky. This picture used to belong to Judge MacCue, and is perhaps the best example of the early period. Next comes a smaller canvas, dated 1866, showing cattle on the road, with trees and luminous sky. This middle-period painting indicates the broadening trend of the artist's brush. Of 1889 is a red, flaming sky through dark trees, with which Inness' name perhaps is most associated. These three pictures, of such signal distinction, form the keynote to a collection of great variety, in which, however, the less important numbers are far overshadowed by those of greater note.

We turn then to a characteristic Mauve, two horses in the ploughfield, with a gray low-hanging sky. It is a picture for which

the artist received about \$200; the present owner paid a good advance on this sum, yet he has a prize worth several times his investment. There are few pictures by Mauve of its size that can compare with it for lucid treatment and charm. A Willem Verscheur, the Horace Vernet of the Holland School, hangs under the Mauve, and shows a stable interior, where the animal stands in the vitality of the master's drawing, while the canvas is infused with that rich golden color which we find in Decamps. Opposite hangs a Rosa Bonheur in which the landscape has received fully as much artistic treatment as the cattle, and more than is usually found in her work.

The Carleton Wiggins shows its superiority over the Verboekhoven, which is its pendant. Both show the points of these artists to great advantage for comparison. J. G. Brown is at his best when he does not paint—well, we know. This little girl in a shady grove is acknowledged by Brown himself to be one of his best works. C. Y. Turner is also represented, while one of the latest additions to the collection is a large landscape composition, by the Brooklyn artist Gustave Wiegand, which is perhaps somewhat weak and conventional as a whole, but yet has a poetic atmosphere which is convincing as to its worth.

It is said that A. H. Wyant never painted a poor picture. The two examples which hang here, of medium size, need not this statement, for on their own merits they are of exceeding importance. Nor do I think that they would much suffer in comparison with the Wyants shown at a recent Lotos exhibition. One is an early example, green and gold, juicy and free. The other, of a later period, shows a path through the woods of exceptional character. How well they are matched by two Barbizon School men, a golden Corot and a figure piece of Daubigny, "The Hunter!"

The Academy picture of M. F. H. de Haas of 1874, showing the flat on which the fishing-boats are standing, bathed in the lurid light of a setting sun, is found here. Of De Scott Evans there is "a lady" of distinctive, sympathetic treatment. An important picture shows a fisherman's family by Clifford P. Grayson, who received the \$2,000 prize at the American Art Galleries in 1886 and the Temple Gold Medal in Philadelphia in 1887.

From foreign artists again we find an interesting Jas. Tissot, antedating his Palestine period, "In the Park," which shows some figures full of movement and action; a Louis Leloir, "Pleading his Cause"; a Lepinay, "Venice"; an Adrien Moreau, "The Gypsies"; a Hagborg, with somewhat hard color, but a pleasing composition and superior to his examples seen last winter in the Clarke Exhibition; a charming little haying scene by Veyrassat; and the favorite model of Lerolle, which appears also in the artist's "Organ Recital" at the Metropolitan Museum, posing here in a meditative mood "After the Ball."

A work of Hippolyte (or Paul, as he usually called himself) Delaroche has some historical value. It was painted soon after the artist had left the studio of Gros, and before he had left the lines of classicism. It represents Charles Edward, "The Pretender," after his defeat hiding in a cave where Flora MacDonald brings food to him and his followers. Although not of the best period of this artist, it still commands attention for its true portrayal and excellent grouping. Of Pasini there is an Oriental gateway with grove and Arabs, which would have added to the artist's reputation had it been the last picture he painted. O. de Thoren shows some Troyesque cattle; Glisenti, "The Rosary," a bit of strong painting of virile color; Cassilear an important landscape; Emile Renouf, "Hoisting the Night Signal," a good example of the falling shadows upon the waters.

Passing by such names as Heyl, Diedrich, G. A. Reid, the Toronto artist; Baron Leys; Miss Vande Sande Bakhuysen, with a beautiful basket of roses, better than Robie ever painted; Detti, Bierstadt, Whittaker; Steenks, the still-life painter, it remains yet to stand before the splendid work of Verestchagin, of whom there are several examples. The smaller ones show a forceful study head of a Russian Rabbi, a tomb in Palestine, the Kremlin in winter, with the clear, pungent atmosphere, and a magnificent, ethereal view of the Himalaya Mountains. Two large examples of the great Russian are at present on view in the Brooklyn Art Museum; here, however, there is kept perhaps one of the greatest of Verestchagin's works. It is the large canvas, "The Crucifixion," in which the multitude of typical humanity surges around the foot of the hill and against the city wall, while up above the tragedy of the world is enacted. It is an overpowering example, less theatrical than Munkacsy's famous painting, and shows that masterly handling with technical perfection which has raised the artist to be the foremost exponent of Muscovite art.

Here and there the eye is relieved by old lacquer Japanese figures out of a Hindoo temple, exquisite bronzes, of which Pinedo's "Arab on the March" is far beyond the commercial French bronzes generally found; while of marble statuary there is an "Unwilling Bather" by Russo, the designer of the Columbus Monument on the Circle, Central Park South.